

*The Mutual Connexion between Religious
Truth and Civil Freedom;*

*Between Superstition, Tyranny, Irreligion,
and Licentiousness:*

CONSIDERED IN

TWO SERMONS

Preached in *Septemb.* 1746,

AT THE

Cathedral Church of CARLISLE,

During the ASSIZES held there for the
Trial of the REBELS.

By JOHN BROWN, M.A. DD



L O N D O N: *J. Leake*

Printed for R. DODSLEY at Tully's Head in
Pall-mall; and sold by M. COOPER in *Pater-*
noster Row.

(Price One Shilling.)



The Manual of the Roman Catholic Religion
and Civil Education;

By the Rev. John J. O'Connell, D.D.,
and Licentiate of the Holy See.

CONSIDERED IN

TWO SEASONS

By the Rev. John J. O'Connell, D.D.,
and Licentiate of the Holy See.



BY JOHN J. O'CONNELL, D.D.

AND LICENTiate OF THE HOLY SEE.

THE REV. JOHN J. O'CONNELL, D.D.,
AND LICENTiate OF THE HOLY SEE.

THE REV. JOHN J. O'CONNELL, D.D.,
AND LICENTiate OF THE HOLY SEE.

THE REV. JOHN J. O'CONNELL, D.D.,
AND LICENTiate OF THE HOLY SEE.

THE REV. JOHN J. O'CONNELL, D.D.,
AND LICENTiate OF THE HOLY SEE.



TO THE

Right Reverend Father in God,

Sir *George Fleming*, Bart.

Lord Bishop of CARLISLE.

My LORD,

TH O' I am sensible the following Discourses must recommend themselves chiefly by their *Intention*; yet *that*, being favourable to Religion and Liberty, is *therefore* sure of your LORDSHIP's Approbation and Acceptance. On
this

this Account I shall make no further
Apology for my present Address, save
only that I am desirous of taking this
publick Occasion, to make my Acknow-
ledgments for the many Favours con-
ferred by your LORDSHIP, on

My LORD,

Your LORDSHIP's

Most Dutiful,

Most Obliged

Humble Servant,

JOHN BROWN.



THE
*Mutual Connexion between Religious
Truth and Civil Freedom ;*
CONSIDERED IN
A SERMON, &c.

JOHN, Chap. viii. Ver. 32.
*Ye shall know the Truth, and the
Truth shall make you free.*



O those who consider this di-
vine Passage of our Saviour,
it must needs appear strange,
that his heavenly Doctrines
should ever be perverted into
a Sanctuary for Ignorance and Oppression.
Were not this known to be fact, we might
with

with Reason believe it impossible. That *Superstition* should claim Protection from that Gospel which assures us *we shall know the Truth*—That *Tyranny* should pretend a Commission from the same Gospel, which assures us that *the Truth shall make us free* !

This Observation, however, suggests to us a plain Account of the Motives of that Church which deprives it's Members of the Use of holy Scripture ; and proves, that altho' it's Leaders are not Masters of *true* Wisdom, they are at least great Proficients in *false*. They are conscious there is such a natural Connexion between *Truth* and *Freedom*, that the one cannot subsist, but the other will arise : they know that *Ignorance* and *Slavery* are so powerfully united, that the most effectual Way to support the *one*, is to establish the *other*.

But as they are not very forward to explain themselves on this Subject, it may not be improper upon this Occasion to represent it in it's true Light. I shall therefore in my following Discourse consider,

1st, The

1st, The strong and necessary Connexion between *Superstition* and *Tyranny*.

2^{dly}, The no less Mutual Connexion between *Religious Truth* and *Civil Freedom* : and

3^{dly}, I shall make some Observations in Consequence of these Principles.

Let us then first consider the Connexion between *Superstition* and *Tyranny*.

If we regard the *grosser* Kinds and more *active* Principles of Superstition, as they affect the Rulers of Mankind, we shall plainly perceive their Tendency towards every kind of Tyranny and Oppression. Our Ideas of Perfection are drawn from what we believe of the Supreme Being : and as Vice, evil Passions, and Cruelty, are the vile Materials of which the superstitious Man compounds his God, so his Opinions and his Actions which regard either himself or Mankind, must be suitable to this absurd System of Belief. Hence then we may discover the fatal Effects of Superstition with respect to Government. The Prince or Magistrate, thus under

der the Dominion of Error, mistakes Deformity for Divine Perfection, and copies it : As he is generally complimented with the high Title of the Almighty's Vicegerent, he transfers all the monstrous Visions of his Brain into real Practice, and acts the most palpable Absurdities under the Influence of a misguided Imitation. Is the God he hath figured to himself, of a suspicious or implacable Nature ? What can more effectually lead him to every Gratification of Jealousy and Revenge ?—Does he form to himself a Deity partial to few, a Respector of Persons, dispensing his Rewards and Punishments without Regard to the Merits or Demerits of Mankind ? What can more violently tend to form and fix in his Breast an iniquitous and blood-thirsty Temper ; to destroy all the Impressions of Equity which he may have had from God and Nature ?—Does he cloath his Deity in Vanity and Caprice ? Does he paint him in his Imagination as fond of an ill-grounded Praise, as building his Glory on the Destruction of his Creatures ? What can more certainly effect the utter Extirpation
of

of every social Virtue? What can more certainly blow up his Pride into Madness, extinguish Pity, light up a false and dreadful Ambition, and lead him to the Pursuit of an imaginary Glory, on the Ruins of all that is praise-worthy and good?

Thus we see in what manner Superstition stands connected with the Exercise of Tyranny; but its Operations would by no means be compleat, did it not qualify the Minds of Men to receive the Yoke which it had thus prepared for them.

That Mankind in their natural State are fond of Liberty, scarce needs a particular Proof. That wholesome Food and warm Clothing are preferable to Rags and Hunger, is evident to any one in Possession of his Senses. On this account Tyranny and Usurpation can never thoroughly extinguish these Dictates of common Apprehension, till they have called in Superstition to their Aid. This powerful *Enchantress* can indeed in one Sense work *Miracles* and *lying Wonders*, — can dress up *sordid Fear* and Slavery in the Garb of *rightful Obedience*, — can exhibit the

B

most

most *diabolical Tyranny* under the Appearance of *divine Right*, — can transform Cowardice into Virtue, — the Love of Freedom into Treason, — can lock up the Senses, and annihilate the Understanding, — can reduce her Votaries to the abject Condition of the Idol they adore, *which hath Ears but cannot hear, and Eyes but cannot see* *, — can impose the Dreams of Bigots for the Illuminations of Truth, and the Forgeries of Knaves for the Commands of Heaven. Thus dreadfully does Superstition work when admitted into the Heart of Man ; and hence becomes the most effectual Engine in the Hands of Tyranny. The Activity of the Human Mind does naturally repel the Impositions of outward Force : But when Thought itself is subdued, and Shackles laid upon the Understanding, then it is that all Possibility of Resistance vanisheth ; then it is that Tyranny reigns without Controul, and perpetrates the most horrid Absurdities, not only with Impunity but Applause.

* Psal. 115. This is fairly enough imply'd in what the Psalmist says in a subsequent Verse ; where, having before insisted on the *Insensibility* of Idols, he adds, " They that make them are *like unto them*, and so are " *all they that put their Trust in them*.

And as *Superstition* is thus favourable to *Tyranny*, so, if we invert the Proposition, we shall find that *Tyranny* when established is no less favourable to *Superstition*.

It is the Interest of a vicious and cruel Tyrant, to be perswaded, if possible, that his God is like himself: And whatever we ardently desire to believe, *that* too easily wins its way to the Heart. The selfish Passions of Men, whatever clear Conviction they may require in order to their Restraint, need none such in order to their Encouragement: They are ingenious in finding out Reasons in their own Favour; and the lightest Pretence, when seconded by Inclination, is often too strong for the strongest Proofs, when oppos'd by the natural Eloquence of the Passions. Hence whatever Notions of a God can make a Tyrant easy under his confirmed Crimes, will be greedily sought after and embraced: He will industriously view his Creator's Image in the deformed Mirrour of *Superstition*, because he dares not behold it in that of Truth.

Thus Tyranny gives a Byass towards Superstition on the Part of the Prince ; and on the slightest Examination it will appear, that Slavery has the same Tendency on the Part of the People. Where arbitrary Will takes Place, Ignorance is its best Security: All Knowledge is dangerous, is fatal, as it opens the Eyes of the deluded Multitude, shews them their own Wretchedness, and points out the easy Methods of Redress. Hence in the Dominions of Tyranny, Ignorance is kept up and fenced as a main Pillar of State. Now, it is clear beyond a Doubt, that Ignorance is the great Parent of Credulity and Superstition: *Wonder*, tho' it be really the Seed of Knowledge, yet derives its Original from the Want of it: Where this natural Principle of Wonder is cherished by Freedom, it shoots up and opens into Knowledge ; but where checked by the ill Influence of Tyranny, it degenerates into Ignorance *confirm'd*. The Soul thus forbid to take its full Range, is subdued into Fear and Cowardice ; every thing *unaccountable* is regarded as *supernatural* and *divine* : Strange and groundless Apprehensions

prehenfions of Things unknown, deprefs all the noble Faculties of the Mind, and prepare it to receive with the moft abject Submiffion the Tricks and Legends of Impofture.

Thus we have a full View of the Connexion between Tyranny and Superftition, and of the firm and mutual Support which they communicate to each other. Let us now turn to the brighter Side of human Nature, and confider *Religious Truth* and *Civil Freedom*, between which we fhall find a like *Connexion* and Support no lefs *reciprocal* and *strong*.

It was the Opinion of a celebrated Ancient, that the Firmament with all its Furniture of Stars revolving in the moft perfect Order and Magnificence, was prefented by the fupreme Being to the Eyes of Mortals, on purpofe that by viewing the Regularity of this glorious Train, they might be moved to tranfcribe its Beauty into their own Life and Morals.*

And

* This is *Plato's* Doctrine. But *Tully*, in the Perfon of the *old Stoic Cenfor*, carries the Matter ftill farther. *Credo Deos immortales fparfiffe animos in corpora humana; ut effent qui terras tuerentur, quique celeftium ordinem contemplantes, imitarentur eum vitæ modo atque constantia.*

CATO Major.

And surely we may thus far subscribe to his Opinion, that the Man who entertains a just Idea of the divine Nature, who reads his Perfections in his Word and Works, hath the noblest and most engaging Model for his Imitation. More particularly the Rulers of Mankind, who are or ought to be the *Representatives of Heaven*, have the most lively and persuaſive Leſſon in the Works of God: There is not the leaſt Circumſtance in Creation, but what inſtructs them to be juſt and merciful: Here they behold Power directed to the Ends of Wiſdom; and both Power and Wiſdom ſubſervient to the Ends of Goodneſs: They ſee the *King of Kings* ſhine forth in continued Acts of Beneficence; and may be convinced, that he never exerciſeth his Might but to diſſuſe his Bounty. A noble Pattern! which cannot fail to influence where there is the leaſt Degree of Reflexion—which if properly attended to, cannot fail to render a Prince *juſt*, and a People *happy*!

The Effects of Religious Truth on the Minds and Paſſions of a People are no leſs favourable to Liberty. A juſt Senſe of the Condition and Dignity of Man,—of the Rank
which

which he bears in Creation,—the Knowledge of God's Goodness and Perfections,—of his Hatred to Injustice and Oppression,—all these elevate the human Soul, and raise it to a Love of Freedom : Not of that Licentiousness which is the Off-spring of Vice, but that true Greatness of Mind which is the Parent of every Virtue. It is this *extended View* of Things, which drives every partial and ungenerous Thought from the Breasts of Mankind ; and inspires them with that *modest Pride*, that *noble Humility*, which expects indeed and even demands the Possession of its own Rights, but is equally zealous in securing the Rights of others.

Thus favourable is Religious Truth to Civil Liberty, which in its Turn becomes no less the Support of Religious Truth. Indeed not only the Perfection, but the very Being of Religious Truth depends on the Exercise of Freedom. Whatever some may fear from an open and unlimited Enquiry, it seems evidently the only Means God hath vouchsafed us for the Attainment of Truth. The *Abuse* of it may be *dangerous*, but the *Want* of it is *fatal* : Without this, Opinion degenerates in-

to

to Absurdity, as a Field runs to Weeds without a proper Cultivation. Such are the undoubted Principles of the Gospel, where we are commanded to *prove all Things and bold fast* that which is good; where we are not only allowed, but required *to be able to give a Reason for the Faith and the Hope that is in us*. This Principle is consonant with the strictest Reason: It is *Falsehood* only that loves and retires into Darkness: *Truth* delights in the Day, and demands no more than a just and a strong Light, to appear in perfect Beauty. A rigid Examination is its only Test: For we know by Experience, that even Obstinacy and Error can endure the *Fires* of Persecution; but it is genuine Truth, and *that* alone, which comes out pure and unchanged from the *severer Tortures* of Debate.

The Connexion between *Religious Truth* and *Civil Freedom* being thus apparent, let me now in Conclusion add a few Observations, such as may naturally arise from this Subject, as it regards our present Situation.

I. From

1. From these Principles we may, in many Cases, gain a clear and certain *Criterion* of Religious Truth and Falsehood. Our Saviour hath told us, that the Truth *shall make us free*: Therefore whatever Opinions are advanced as Truth, if they tend to the Establishment of Tyranny, we may be assured they are *Falsehood in Disguise*. Hence we may gain no inconsiderable Evidence against the essential Tenets of the Church of *Rome*, as they are known in Fact, wherever they prevail, to be the common Instruments of Oppression. To enumerate these, would at present be a Task too laborious; a general Idea is given of them under the first Division of this Discourse: Let it suffice therefore to observe here, that as the Head of that Church is the great Enemy of Truth and Freedom, the great Patron of Tyranny and Falsehood, he may at least in a secondary and figurative Sense be justly accounted *Anti-Christ*.

2. From the Connexion which subsists between Superstition and Tyranny, we may be warned against the specious Pretences of *both*. Does the Papist profess only to impose his

C

Tenets,

Tenets, while he pretends to be the Advocate for Freedom?—If he be sincere, convince him of his Mistake—if artful, resist his Sophistry—for he is at that very Instant pleading the Cause, and preparing the Chains of Tyranny. On the other Hand, does the slavish Advocate for hereditary unalienable Right declare his Zeal for true Religion?—He is either blind or faithless—for his sole Interest and Hope lies in the Propagation of Ignorance and Falsehood.

3. From the mutual Connexion between Religious Truth and Civil Freedom we may observe, that the Views which true Christianity opens to the Mind of Man, are a surer and nobler Foundation of Liberty, than any the ancient Heathens were ever possessed of: Even as far as Obligation is superior to Impulse, and Principle to Passion: They give Mankind a juster and more enlarged Conception of each other's Rights, than what unassisted Reason could ever produce, even in the most polite and enlightned Ages. For amidst all the Triumphs of Liberty in *Greece* and *Rome*, we know, that altho' many had *strong*, yet few had *consistent* Notions of Freedom.

dom. The most unjust Conquests over peaceable Nations, the most barbarous Treatment of all who opposed the Progress of their Arms, were not only allowed as innocent, but boasted of as glorious. Cities were ruined, Provinces plundered, and whole Kingdoms laid in Ashes, thro' an absurd and impious Love of their Country ; a Principle no better in many of its Consequences, than the most cruel and accursed Bigotry. Even among themselves a whole Race of unhappy People, and innocent Children, were destined to a severe and endless Slavery, robb'd of all the natural Rights of Men, their Life only excepted, and that too at the Disposal of an arbitrary Master. Thus Liberty seemed no more than the casual Product of *high Spirit*, often of Pride and Revenge, seldom or never the Result of Rational Opinion : They were so meanly fond of monopolizing it themselves, that they snatched every Opportunity of wresting it from others : Aspiring to the Name of Heroes, they fell below the Character of Men ; and while they professed to tread in the Paths of true Greatness, were notoriously false to the Rules of common E-

quity. How different are the Sentiments which Christianity inspires ! This teacheth us, that the Laws of Justice and Charity ought to extend to all Denominations of Men ; that the Rich and Poor meet together for each other's Good ; that the Lord is the Maker of them all ; that altho' our first and principal Cares ought to be fixed on those who are most closely related to us by the Ties of Blood, Friendship and Society, yet that no *exclusive* Regards must prevail, but our Benevolence and (as far as in us lies) our Beneficence extend to the whole Race of Mankind : In a Word, that we must be *burning and shining Lights*, shedding our kindly Influences on all around us, according to that just Proportion which their *respective Distances* may demand.

4. Let me represent to you some of the terrible Calamities which the Union of Tyranny and Superstition must have produced, had Providence, for the Punishment of our Sins, permitted their late Attempts to prevail. The dreadful Influence of Tyranny on the higher Ranks of Mankind ; the fatal Consequences which must flow from the Destruction

struction of publick Justice, to all who are possessed of Preferments, Honours and Estates, are so easily seen, and have been so often explained, that it were needless to dwell on this Subject. But as the Effects of Tyranny on those who earn their Bread by the Labour of their Hands, are not quite so evident; and as it hath been sometimes insinuated during the late Troubles, that it is a Matter of no Concernment to the lower Ranks of Mankind, what Form of Government prevails, it may not be amiss to offer a few Thoughts on this Argument.

To you therefore, my honest and industrious Countrymen, I would now more particularly address myself: And as it is certain that nothing but Liberty can make Commerce flourish, so nothing but the Success of Commerce can give Life and Vigour to your respective Crafts. You have lately seen, that on the very Approach of Tyranny, your several Occupations began to languish and decay: But had this mighty Evil established itself among us, it would have thin'd the Land like a devouring Pestilence; so that the greatest Part of you must either have perished
 2 with.

with Hunger, or have subsisted by Theft and Robbery. Consider farther, that you now live under the Protection of a King, who hath ever held sacred the Property of his meanest Subject ; who never made you the Instruments of private Ambition or Revenge ; nor ever led you to the Field, but for the Defence of your Families, your Friends and Country : But had you received the Yoke of a Tyrant, you must soon have felt and soon lamented the Change : Rights and Privileges you must have bid farewell to,—nay, to the very Name and Condition of Men : You must have been doomed to be regarded as so many Drovers of Cattle, the Property of a giddy and despotic Master, who would only have watched the Opportunity of selling your Lives to his own Advantage, and then dragg'd you forth to the Slaughter. Even those few among you who had been suffered to continue your Employments, must have sunk under the common Calamity, and laid no Claim either to your Limbs or Labour : Exorbitant Taxes on your honest Industry, together with other Methods of vile Policy, must have drained you to the last Farthing : That comfortable Food and Raiment

Raiment which you now divide with those that are dear to you, must have been exchanged for Want and Wretchedness; till you had been convinced of this melancholy Truth,—That a Tyrant will make the utmost Penny of every Slave in his Dominions, that hath either a Head to contrive, or a pair of Hands to work with.

And as to the Consequences of Popery and Superstition—it is evident you must have been equally involved in these, with the greatest of Mankind: Nay, they must have fallen on you in the most distressful manner, as you must have been the farthest removed from all the Means of Knowledge and Instruction. The Word of God, which now administers Peace to you in Prosperity, and Comfort in Affliction, that blessed Word must have been torn from you by the Hands of Bigots: And tho' new Opinions could not have been forced upon you by outward Terror, yet must you either have lived in a continued and sinful State of Diffimulation, or have been led without Mercy to the Stake. But then your innocent Posterity—how deplorable must have been *their* Lot!—deprived of all the Means
of

of religious Instruction, — alienated from the Knowledge of God, — transformed into a Race of Slaves and Bigots ; — so *cruel*, as to persecute even to Death those who had never wrong'd them ; — so *mean*, as to lick the Dust from the Feet of those who had deprived them of every earthly Blessing ; — sunk in a State worse than that of total Ignorance, an absurd and perverted Faith ; — a Faith which renders its Profelytes the Destroyers of their own Kind, — which roots out all the natural Impressions of Humanity, and infuses the Spirit and the Cruelty of Hell !

Such must have been the Fate of our selves and our Posterity, had Providence suffered the late Rebellion to succeed. Yet let no one think these Representations made with a View to exasperate any Person against the unhappy Instruments of it: Heaven (working by the Courage and Conduct of an illustrious Prince) hath at length put them in our Power: And tho' their Guilt be deep, yet were it the Height of Meanness to insult over their Misfortunes. The most becoming Part for every private Person is, to leave them
to

to the Justice of our excellent Laws, tempered by the wise Mercy of a gracious King.

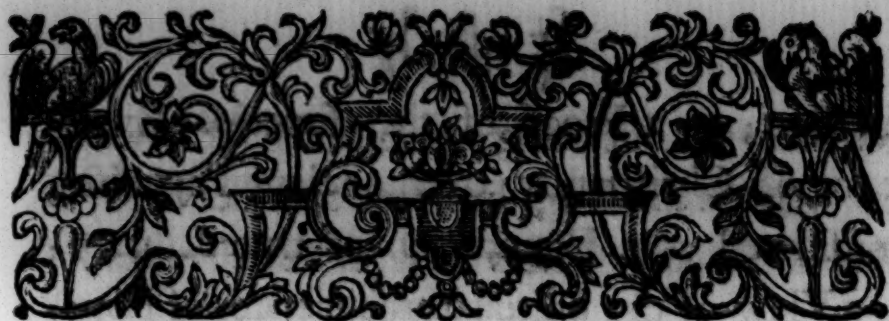
Lastly therefore, and above all, let us on this Occasion turn our Reflections on our selves; and as we are happily possessed of Truth and Freedom, so let us use them as we ought. If they have not their proper Effect on our Lives and Manners, if they do not produce in us a suitable Advancement in Piety and Virtue, it were even scandalous to boast that we enjoy the Benefit of them. Let me add, that the proper Use and Application of these Benefits, are the only Means by which we can hope for their Continuance among us. If private Vice strikes at the Foundation, the grand Fabrick of our Constitution must inevitably fall, and leave us an easy Prey to the future Attempts of Tyranny and Superstition. Let these Considerations therefore determine us to be steady in our Obedience to the Dictates of *Divine Truth*, and temperate in the Enjoyment of *true Liberty*: That the Knowledge of pure Religion may render us wise and good, and that in the Possession of our just Rights we may

be free, yet not using our Liberty for a Cloak of *Maliciousness* †, but as the Servants of that God, whose Service is *perfect Freedom*.

† 1 Pet. ii. 16. The original Word *κακια*, here translated *Maliciousness*, is with good Reason thought by some Criticks to imply *Sedition* or *Rebellion*. See *Law's* Considerations on the Theory of Religion, p. 248. *Benson* on the Place.



THE



THE
*Mutual Connexion between Religious
Truth and Civil Freedom ;*
CONSIDERED IN
A SERMON, &c.

JOHN, Chap. viii. Ver. 32.

*Ye shall know the Truth, and the
Truth shall make you free.*



HUS we see the mutual Connexion between Superstition and Tyranny ; between Religious Truth and Civil Freedom : We have obtained a Criterion of Truth and Falshood, — a Caution against the Pretences of Bigotry and Oppression ;

pression ; — a Proof of the superior Excellence of Christianity over ancient Paganism, considered as a Foundation of true Liberty ; — a View of the united Consequences of Popery and lawless Power ; — and lastly, we have touched upon a most cogent Motive to a strict Observance of the Dictates of Truth and Freedom.

It is my Design, on the present Occasion, to prosecute this Argument in a more particular Manner ; — to convince you, that altho' the open Attempts of Tyranny and Superstition have met with their deserved Fate, we are by no means yet secure in the Possession of Truth and Liberty, so long as we abuse and pervert them ; — that altho' we have destroyed the declared Enemy that came to *spread Desolation in open Day*, we must guard with renewed Diligence against the secret Adversary that *soweth his Tares in the Night Season* ; — that there are other Foes of Truth and Freedom, besides those already mentioned ; less apparent indeed, and therefore the more dangerous ; in their Nature equally connected with, and supported by each other ; and in
their

their Consequences no less destructive of all the Blessings of Society, These are *Infidelity* and *Licentiousness*. In my following Discourse therefore I shall consider,

I. The mutual Connexion between *Licentiousness* and *Irreligion*.

II. The strong and surprizing Connexion these have with *Tyranny* and *Superstition*:
And

III. I shall subjoin a few Observations.

Let us then first consider how powerfully *Irreligion* and *Licentiousness* produce each other.

That *Atheism* and *Irreligion* tend to *Licentiousness* and *Vice*, will appear indisputable to those who consider the Nature of Man. The Brute Creation are chained down by their several Instincts, guided by the Hand of Providence; they are effectually and uniformly drawn to a particular System of Action, from which they never vary: But Man, who hath not so strong a Byass laid upon his Passions, either as to their Objects or Degrees, he, it is evident, stands in need of a higher Principle in order to regulate his Actions. This Regulation nothing can totally effect,

effect, but a just and lively Faith in an Almighty and All-seeing God. It is not to be deny'd, but the Fear of human Laws operate powerfully with most Men; yet many Crimes must needs escape their Cognizance, and many elude their Power. It must be allowed, that the Love of Reputation would preserve at least the Appearance of Virtue in the common Occurrences of Life; yet as to this Principle, let but Vice present her more powerful Allurements, and she need not much doubt of a compleat Conquest. Some, it is granted, would be led to the Practice of Virtue by that noble Self-satisfaction which attends it; yet even this, unless to a few Minds of uncommon Strength and Greatness, could never be sufficient *to carry us through all Temptations, and make us perfect in every good Work.* But with regard to the Generality of Mankind, where the refined Passions are weak, and the selfish Appetites headstrong, *there* Irreligion must be attended with the most fatal Consequences: It must leave them to the Suggestions of their own Lusts, those *blind Leaders of the Blind*; those deceitful
Wild-

Wildfires, whose irregular Motions *may* indeed *possibly* conduct them in the right Way, but more *probably will* mislead them into that Path, which goes down to the Chambers of Death.

To this general Doctrine an Objection hath been urged with much Art and Diligence, by a great but sceptical Genius *. He affirms, that religious Faith is of no important Consequence with regard to Morals; because if we examine the Conduct of Mankind, we shall see those, who pretend the greatest Zeal for Religion, no less the Slaves of Passion and Vice, than the declared Advocates of Infidelity; — that there have been Men of *both* Characters equally fam'd for Worth and Dishonesty; and that in general the Actions of Men are determined by their *natural Temper*, and not at all by Principle. These Propositions he endeavours to support by a great Variety of Examples.

The Objection carries indeed the Appearance of Force; yet upon a near Examination, this entirely vanishes.

It

* Bayle on Comets, *passim*.

It must be owned, That in most Countries a great Part of what is called Religion, deserves no other Name than that of *Absurdity made sacred*; That the Commands of God are swallowed up and lost in the Traditions of Men: And it were strange indeed, should Bigotry and false Religion produce that Uprightness of Heart, that Perfection of Morals, which is the genuine Effect of Truth.

It must be owned, that with regard to Religious Principles, every Man has the Power of being a *Hypocrite*: That Knaves, in order to be accounted honest, may appear devout. And we may reasonably suppose, if we consider the innumerable Artifices of Villany, that the outward Profession of Religion becomes a frequent Disguise to an atheistical and corrupted Heart.

It must be owned, that even where true Religion is known and professed, it is seldom properly inculcated: The Sanctions of future Rewards and Punishments, from which it derives its Force, must be very strongly impress'd on the human Mind, ere they can work their full Effects, because they are
distant

distant and *unseen*. The Senses and their attendant Passions are continually urging their Demands, so that nothing but a Habit of Reflexion thoroughly fixed, can possibly resist their Sollicitations. Thus for want of a proper Impression, religious Principles are seldom *gained*, and therefore seldom *operate*.

But where a *sincere* and *lively* Faith takes Place, where the Mind is convinced of the Being of a God,—that he *is*, and is a *Rewarder* of them that diligently seek him ; — where a *Habit* is gained of connecting this great Truth with every Thought, Word, and Action, — there it may justly be affirmed, that Piety and Virtue *cannot but* prevail. To say in a Case of this Nature, that Man will not act according to his Principle, is to contradict the united Evidence of Reason and Experience. We see how true Men commonly are to their Principle of Pride and mistaken Honour ; — how true to their Principle of Avarice or mistaken Interest ; — how true to their Principle, of a Regard to human Laws : They are thus consistent in their Obedience to these various Principles, because they have strongly connected these several Views of Pride, Avarice, and Fear,

with their own Happiness : Therefore, when-ever the religious Principle takes place at all, when-ever it becomes in the same Manner *habitually* connected with the Happiness of the Agent, it must needs become *infinitely* more powerful than *these* ; because the *Good* it promiseth, and the *Evil* it threatens, are *infinitely greater* and more *lasting*. Hence it appears that the Corruption of Mankind, even in those Countries where the purest Religion is professed, does not arise from the *Weakness* of religious Principle, but the *Want* of it.

As to the Force of *natural* Temper, it is great indeed : But they who think it innate or unalterable, seem to have made no deep Enquiries into the Heart of Man. Habit is allowed to be a second Nature ; and on Examination it will probably appear, that what we call Nature is but the first Habit. Every moral Habit seems to arise from a View of Happiness, and every View of Happiness is a Principle of Action. Thus the more we look into the Constitution of Man, the more we shall be convinced, that Principles are not so much formed by *natural Temper*, as *natural Temper* is formed by *first Principles*.

It may be farther observed in favour of Religion, that even where it is not so thoroughly inculcated as to become a consistent Principle of Action, yet it may still have a frequent and considerable, tho' a partial and imperfect Influence. Tho' you suppose all Mankind of such a capricious Nature as not to be steady to any particular Principle, yet still the religious one will mix with the rest, and naturally prevail in its Turn. And this is certainly a common Case among the looser and more inconsiderate Ranks of Men ; who, altho' by no means *uniformly* swayed by the Precepts of Religion, are yet *frequently* struck with Horror at the Thought of Actions peculiarly vile, and deterred by the Apprehension of an All-seeing God from the Commission of Crimes uncommonly atrocious.

Thus Religion, where-ever *sincerely* and *habitually* embraced, is the natural Parent of Integrity and Virtue : Whereas Atheism, at best, leaves a Man to the Impulse of Appetite and Passion. The religious Man hath gained a full View of his Sovereign Good ; — the Atheist must seek it in the Darknefs and Irregularities of his Temper. The one keeps his Eye fixed on the Pole-star that leads him

assuredly to Happiness; — the other becomes the Sport of every Gust of Passion, — a Prey to the Tempests of his own Heart. The Christian reveres his Nature, as he is one of the Sons of God, and *Heirs of Immortality*; — the Unbeliever despiseth himself as the Work of Chance, as being no more than one of *the Beasts that perish*. The first looks up to Heaven with Hope and Joy; — the latter, which way soever he turns his Eyes, meets with nothing but Despondence and Despair. In a Word, Religion includes and enforces all the *Obligations to Virtue*; — Atheism, all the *Temptations to Vice*. And tho' it is admitted that some noble Characters would, under any Circumstances, pursue Virtue for it's own Sake; yet if we figure to our selves a Man *deprived* of all the Hopes, and *let loose* from all the Fears of a Futurity, nor yet guarded by an uncommon Share both of Philosophy and *fine Temper*, we shall with Reason conclude, that his Sentiments are as justly as they are elegantly described in the following Passage of the Book of Wisdom: — *We are born at all adventure, and we shall be hereafter as tho' we had never been;*

—our

— our Body shall be turned into Ashes, and our Spirit shall vanish as the soft Air : — Come on therefore, and let us enjoy the good Things that are present ; let us fill our selves with costly Wine and Ointments, and let no Flower of the Spring pass by us : Let us crown our selves with Rose-buds before they be withered ; let none of us go without his Part of our Voluptuousness ; let us leave Tokens of our Joyfulness in every Place ; for this is our Portion, and our Lot is this. Let us oppress the Poor that is righteous, let us not spare the Widow, nor reverence the white Hairs of the Aged ; but let our Strength be the Law of Justice. †

Thus Infidelity and Atheism stand connected with Licentiousness, which on its part tends no less to the Propagation of Infidelity.

It is the natural Effect of most Vices to cloud the Understanding ; to involve it in that Darkness which themselves delight in. When the Heart is immersed in Sensuality, the superior Faculties lie neglected : Reflexion is regarded as impertinent and troublesome, because it is an Enemy to false Pleasure ; and is therefore industriously banished from the
Circles

† Wisdom, Ch. ii.

Circles of the Licentious. Thus the Eye of the Soul is closed, and all farther Improvement in religious Truth becomes utterly impossible. Even tho' a pious Education hath fixed the Principles of Religion, yet a high Degree of Vice can easily destroy them. The licentious Man hates the Light of Conscience and Religion, because it discovers to him his own Unworthiness: He therefore takes Pains to extinguish that Lustre which he cannot support; and is never at rest till he hath formed to himself a System of Opinions as dark as his own Practice, — such as may suit the Irregularity of his Conduct, and sooth him in the Possession of his beloved Sins. Thus with much Pains he labours to be blind, and *lives* himself into Infidelity and Error.

Hence the reciprocal Connexion between *Infidelity* and *Licentiousness* is evident: Let us now see how both these stand connected with *Superstition* and *Tyranny*.

It will doubtless appear a Paradox to many, that any Relation or Affinity should subsist between Things so opposite in their Nature: Yet they will be found on Examination to encourage and produce each other in a great Variety of Respects.

Super-

Superstition, though the avowed Enemy of Irreligion, is yet very frequently the Source of it. Where ridiculous Notions are advanced as divine Truths, and imposed as such on a deluded People ; *there*, when-ever Thought and Reflexion exert their Power in any Degree, they must at once throw off the received Absurdities, as being repugnant to common Sense. Thus the first Step from Bigotry is to Atheism : For the deluded Person having been bred in the Belief of Impossibilities, no sooner opens his Eyes, than he throws off all Religion as absurd ; because, in the Light he hath always view'd it in, it is really so. This Observation is abundantly confirmed by Fact : Among the ancient Heathens the Popular Belief was superstitious, the Philosophical Tenets were atheistical : And it is well known that Superstition, in her modern Dominions, divides her Empire with the grossest Infidelity.

Superstition is no less connected with Licentiousness of Manners : Not only as it tends to produce Irreligion, but from its proper and immediate Operations. It generally inverts all the Dictates of Morality, as well as common Apprehension ; and instructs its Votaries to

strain

strain indeed *at a Gnat*, but to *swallow a Camel*. It emboldens them to hope for Heaven by the Practice of Ceremony and Grimace, tho' they wallow in all manner of Vice and Impurity: The least Deviation either in *Gesture* or *Opinion* is consigned to eternal Death, — but to mitigate the Rigours of this Sentence, *a Tax absolves the Guilt of Adultery and Murder!* By its Influence blind Faith takes place of rational Assent, outward Pomp of inward Piety; and the idle Fopperies of an impious Devotion are made sacred at the Expence of true Holiness and Virtue. Thus Morals decay, and Licentiousness takes Root: While the grand Promoters of Falseness make their Market of Ignorance and Vice, well knowing how naturally a blind Understanding is connected with a wicked Heart.

Tyranny is no less the Parent of Infidelity and Vice: An Oppressor desires to see neither Religion nor Honesty in his Train: They are not for his Purpose; they are too severe and stubborn, and cannot bend to the Dictates of his Will. Hence where - ever Oppression reigns, the Virtuous and Just are discountenanced, banished, or proscribed; the Wicked
and

and Abandoned are caressed, are rewarded. Atheism is encouraged, because it promotes Corruption; Corruption is encouraged, because it is the ready Tool of Power: Thus Virtue and Religion languish; Infidelity and Vice triumph: The one becomes the Road to Greatness, the other to Neglect and Ruin.

We see then in what Manner *Superstition* and *Tyranny* stand related to *Irreligion* and *Licentiousness*: It only remains now to be considered how these in their Turn promote the Cause of *Tyranny* and *Superstition*.

Could Irreligion and Licentiousness subsist by their own Force, their natural Hatred of Bigotry and Oppression would effectually prevent the Growth and Power of these Usurpers. But such is the Constitution of Things, such is the established Order of Causes and Effects, that Atheism and Vice are of a Self-destroying Kind, and bear the Seeds of Ruin in their own Texture. No free People were ever long atheistical and corrupt, because no corrupt and atheistical People could ever long continue free. Irreligion and bad Morals are a Distemper of such Malignity to a State, that unless they are timely expelled, they at once effect *its* Ruin and *their own*. They

dissolve all those natural Principles on which Societies are built — Sincerity, Temperance, Justice : They introduce abandoned Luxury and deadly Corruption, — the fatal Enemies of Mankind, which work darkly indeed but deeply, and are the more terrible because unseen ! These cruel Destroyers level all the Barriers of Freedom, private Benevolence and publick Spirit ; and deliver up an abandoned devoted People an easy Prey to the Inroads of Ambition and Tyranny.

Thus we obtain a general and enlarged View of these several Principles, and (if we may so speak) of their mutual Action and Reaction on each other. Superstition renders a Monarch oppressive, a People slavish ;—Tyranny leads the Prince to Superstition, the Subject to Credulity. Religious Truth is the Parent of Civil Freedom—this in its turn becomes the Support of Religious Truth. Infidelity promotes Vice—Vice confirms Infidelity. Superstition and Tyranny beget Atheism and Licentiousness—and these (forgetting as it were their own Nature) establish Bigotry and lawless Power.

If we look into Fact, we shall find the Truth of these several Connexions confirmed
by

by the History and Revolutions of all Ages and all Nations. We there see Superstition and Tyranny going hand in hand, mutually supporting and supported, taking their Progress and fixing their Dominion thro' all the Kingdoms of the Earth—overwhelming it in one general Deluge, as the Waters cover the Sea: Here and there a happy Nation emerges from their Empire, breathes for a while in the enlightned Regions of Truth and Freedom; till in their appointed Time, Licentiousness and Irreligion appear, sap the Foundations of the Fabrick, and sink it in the general Abyss of Ignorance and Oppression.

I shall now conclude with a few Reflections drawn from the Subject under Consideration.

1. Hence we may make an Estimate of the comparative Evils and final Effects of Atheism and Superstition, as they regard Society. Plausible Apologies have been offered for *both* by their respective Advocates: But after all, as to their immediate Operations, it is scarce possible to determine with Propriety, which are *universally* more pernicious; because they are widely different, according to the Education, Rank, and Constitution of those on whom they fall. Bigotry is perhaps less to be dreaded

amongst a *People*, and *more* among the higher Ranks of Men, than Irreligion : *This* is most terrible where the sensual Passions are strong ; *that*, where the Imagination is most active. But then as to their final Consequences—tho' it may indeed be said in Mitigation of Atheism, that it cannot long subsist by its own Force—tho' it be urged, that Superstition knows how to establish her Power, and rivet the Chains which she imposes—yet Irreligion is no less to be abhorred, as it is the *sure Means* to a *ruinous End* : It destroys its own Evils indeed, but only to bring on greater, because more lasting. It is therefore equally terrible to Society with that Tyranny and Superstition which it produces ; and may be compared to a furious Torrent that sweeps away the Works of Art and Virtue, and rolls down with continued Rapidity, till itself and the Wrecks it hath made are devoured by the great Deep.

2. We may here take occasion to observe the Weakness and Folly of an Objection often urged by the Advocates for Atheism and Licentiousness, against some of the Principles laid down above. They tell you, that Irreligion and Vice are not of that destructive Nature to Society, which Priests and their Followers

Followers pretend ; because we see many powerful Kingdoms, and particularly a *neighbouring one*, which hath flourished for many Ages, while Licentiousness in Manners and Opinion hath been in its Ascendant.—The Fact objected is true ; and the Answer is easy. —The destructive Nature of Infidelity and Vice is only asserted with respect to *free Governments*. But *that neighbouring Kingdom*, so often the unworthy Object of our Envy and Imitation, is in a state of deep and confirmed Slavery. The shadowy Appearances of Freedom and Happiness which still subsist there, are confined to a small Number of Men, and are the Effects of an *accidental* Taste, often of a *false* Politeness : But as to *the Many*, it is certain they are bury'd in the very Depth of Servitude, Bigotry and Wretchedness. Such a Government therefore (if a Government it may be called, which hath many Evils beyond a State of Nature) such a Government, I say, hath little to fear from the Enemies of Liberty. When Infidelity and Vice have nothing to *oppose*, they have nothing to *conquer* ; and where no Freedom *is*, there no Freedom can be destroy'd. The Establishment of Oppression is the very Evil we dread from Atheism and Immorality : So that in *that* and such

such like Kingdoms their Work is already done : They have finished their Course, and founded the Empire of Tyranny and Superstition ; with whom however they are suffered to live in a kind of amicable Alliance (such as hath been already explain'd) not indeed as Equals, but Inferiors ; and are allow'd to carry on their own Designs in a dependant manner, so far as they are subordinate to the grand Schemes of spiritual and temporal Oppression. — Thus the Malignity of Atheism and Licentiousness is seen alike in every Light, whether we view them as they destroy Freedom, or establish Tyranny.

3. It ought not therefore to be regarded as a Chimæra, as a Conjecture only to be laughed at, that the Emissaries of *France* and *Rome* should be sent among us on their fatal Errands, under the Appearance of *Infidels* and *Atheists*. They are deeply practised in all the Arts of Treachery, and know that to undermine *privately* is to undermine *effectually*. They know how natural the Transition is from Licentiousness to Slavery ; they know that the outward Form of a Constitution cannot long subsist, when its Vitals are corrupted ; and they know that the Vitals of every State are the *Principles* and *Morals* of a People.

More

More especially at present, as their Attempts of declared Violence have miscarry'd, we may be assured they will be indefatigable in the more hidden Methods of Deceit. These are now become their only Resource; outward Force hath proved ineffectual; Argument and Reasoning they are too wise to attempt: But as their Spirit is of that active and implacable Nature, as to leave no possible Means untry'd, so it is reasonable to believe their present Game will be, to render us the Instruments of our own Destruction.

4. Finally therefore and above all, let us guard against their Attempts by a strict Adherence to the Dictates of Truth and Freedom: These are of a permanent and self-supporting Nature; and while sincerely obey'd, do effectually *secure* all the Blessings they *produce*. So long as we are thus true to ourselves, to the Laws of Liberty established in these Kingdoms, and to the Laws of that Gospel from which they are copy'd, we need not be alarmed at the Approaches of Superstition and Tyranny. Truth and Freedom have that native Energy which baffles all the Attempts of Falsehood; and *Britain, like the Hill of Sion, shall be a fair Place, and the Joy of the whole Earth, which may not be removed,*

moved, but standeth fast for ever. If on the contrary, Irreligion and Licentiousness gain Ground among us, our Ruin is determined, is inevitable. The History of every Age and every People,—the Rise and Fall of mighty Kingdoms — the Examples of upright and flourishing, of corrupt and expiring States—all these unite with one Voice to tell us, that Piety and Virtue *only* can make us *free*—that Infidelity and Licentiousness will certainly *enslave* us: That the Admission of Profaneness, Debauchery and Corruption, will inevitably *sink* us in that *general Deluge* of Slavery and Ignorance, in which the Nations around us lie involved: But that if we practise those Truths we know, and rightly use that Freedom we enjoy, we shall be *established as on a Rock*; we shall still rise above the *Waves* that threaten us; *tho' they toss themselves, yet shall they not prevail; tho' they roar, yet shall they not pass over us*: We shall be preserved by that Almighty God who *rules the Raging of the Sea and the Madness of Mankind*; who can say alike to the furious *Ocean* and the cruel *Invader* — *Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther—here shall thy proud Waves be stayed.*

el
n
el
n
l
e
e
e